does not subscribe to this theory. India's foreign policy is wedded to the national ethos of peaceful co-existence between various religious and ethnic groups. India's endeavour at various international and regional forums has been to work towards promotion of peace and stability which are the pre-conditions for economic development and well-being of the people.

ASEAN code on employment of foreign nationals

5053. DR. M. N. DAS :

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether India is planning to push for an ASEAN code on employment of foreign nationals to prevent harassment of its professionals working in South East Asian countries:

(b) If so, whether India has agreed to seek Singapore's help in this matter:

(c) Whether harassment for 200 Indian Information Technology professionals in Malaysia recently and arrest of Polaris CEO in Indonesia has forced New Delhi on this course of action;

(d) Whether this code will provide better working conditions for Indian professionals besides laying out clear guidelines on visa requirements and working norms: and

(e) If so, by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) No.

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

Visa restrictions imposed by Russia

5054. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:

SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Moscow has recently imposed visa restrictions on the countries that pose the threat of illegal immigration and India is one of them;

(b) if so, the details thereof and what steps are being taken to solve the problem;

(c) what have been the result of the meetings between the officials of the two countries: and

(d) whether the new laws would affect the Indian businesses in Russia too?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes.

(b) As per new visa procedures, stemming from a new Law for Foreigners adopted by the Russian Federation, before issuing visas to travellers to the Russian Federation, including Indian travellers, the Embassies and the Consulates General of the Russian Federation seek clearance from their Ministry of Interior. They also require the visa applicants to produce an invitation from recognised Russian institutions. The invitation itself has to be processed through the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. These procedural requirements, along with some others, result in delays in issuance of visas and cause difficulties for the Indian travellers. These difficulties have been pointed out to the Russian authorities.

(c) Given the adverse impact of these new visa regulations on development of overall bilateral relations, including trade and economic ties, the Government of India regularly takes up the issue of a more liberalized visa regime for various categories of visitors from India, including trade and business representatives, in bilateral interactions with the Russian Federation. The Government of India recognises that the issue of visas for foreign nationals is the sovereign right of the country concerned.

(d) Yes.

Allegation on India to use excessive force in J&K

5055. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of some recent U.S. report that India is using excessive force in Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) whether with the said accusation Government's ability to prevent sectarian and religious violence has been put to mark; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) yes. This allegation was made in the U.S. State Department's annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" for 2002, released on 31 March, 2003.